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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/821,589	04/09/2004	Yosuke Hosoya	09792909-5854	1893

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EXAMINER	
CANTELMO, GREGG	
ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
1726	
MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE
03/31/2011	PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/821,589	HOSOYA ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Gregg Cantelmo	1726	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE *3* MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on *28 February 2011 and 17 March 2011*.

2a)☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b)☒ This action is non-final.

3)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4)☒ Claim(s) *1,3,5 and 6* is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6)☒ Claim(s) *1,3,5 and 6* is/are rejected.

7)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10)☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a)☐ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).

11)☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a)☐ All b)☐ Some * c)☐ None of:

1.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.

3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08) Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ .
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Continued Examination Under 37 CFR 1.114

A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on March 17, 2011 has been entered.

Response to Amendment

1. In response to the amendment received February 28, 2011, entered as per the RCE received March 17, 2011:

a. Claims 1, 3 and 5-6 are pending;

b. The prior art rejections of record stand.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

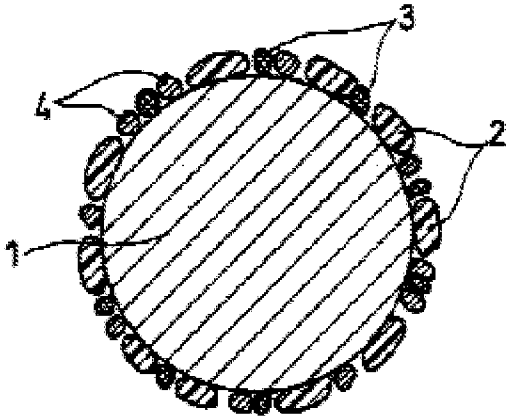
The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office action.

2. Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP '643 in view of either U.S. Patent No. 4,668,594 (Yamaura); U.S. Patent No. 5,958,281 (Takada) or U.S. Patent No. 6,475,663 (Mohwald).

JP '643 discloses a positive active material comprising: particles of a compound oxide of lithium and a transition metal 1 (figures and paragraphs 10 and 24) having an inherent layered structure thereby permitting the intercalation/deintercalation of lithium

during charging/discharging and a coating layer on the active material 1 wherein the coating layer comprises an inorganic lithium compound 4 (paragraphs 10 and 23) and a carbonaceous conductive material 3 (paragraph 10 and 23 as applied to claim 1). The inorganic compound 4 is a lithium compound (paragraph 23 as applied to claim 1). The weight ratio of the particles 1 to the coating 2/3/4 teaches of particle weights of 10 grams relative to about 1 gram of coating material (see examples for weight ratios). Thus JP '643 teaches that the weight ratio of the particles will clearly be at least 70% but less than 98% relative to the coating layer 2/3/4 (as applied to claim 1). The positive active material can be a variety of metal oxides including lithium nickel manganese oxide (para. 24 as applied to claim 1).

The coating layer with the inorganic filler 4 and carbonaceous material 3 substantially covers the entire surface of the base particle 1 as shown in Fig. 1).



JP '643 does not of the inorganic material being either lithium iron phosphate or lithium phosphate (claim 1).

As to the inorganic material being either lithium iron phosphate or lithium phosphate:

Essentially JP '643 teaches of coating lithium metal oxide base particles with a mixture of an inorganic conducting material and an electron conducting material.

While the inorganic conducting materials taught by JP '643 are not inclusive of either lithium iron phosphate or lithium phosphate, JP '643 does teach that the inorganic material is a lithium ion conductive inorganic solid electrolyte material (see abstract). Thus one of ordinary skill in the art would have reasonably appreciated that the inorganic material coated on the positive electrode active material could reasonably be any known teach that the inorganic material is a lithium ion with a reasonable expectation that any such combination would effectively operate in the desired manner taught by JP '643, absent clear evidence to the contrary.

Each of lithium iron phosphate and lithium phosphate are art recognized ion conductive materials used in lithium secondary batteries as shown by either Yamaura (col. 5, ll. 33-37); Takada (col. 1, ll. 32-55); or Mohwald (col. 4, ll. 43-65). Thus it would have been apparent to one of ordinary skill in the art to use either lithium iron phosphate or lithium phosphate as an alternative ion conducting inorganic material coated onto the positive electrode since the primary reference teaches that it is generally known to coat lithium metal oxide base particles with a mixture of a lithium ion conducting inorganic material and an electron conducting material and since the specific inorganic materials of lithium iron phosphate and lithium phosphate are art recognized ion conductive

materials used in lithium secondary batteries as shown by either Yamaura, Takada, or Mohwald.

Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the claimed invention was made to modify the teachings of JP '643 by selecting the lithium ion conducting inorganic material to be either lithium iron phosphate or lithium phosphate since such materials are art recognized lithium ion conducting inorganic materials as shown by either Yamaura, Takada, or Mohwald and one of ordinary skill in the art would have found such a modification to have provided the predictable result of providing a coating to the positive active material having both the requisite electron conducting and lithium ion conducting properties. The selection of a known material based on its suitability for its intended use supported a prima facie obviousness determination in Sinclair & Carroll Co. v. Interchemical Corp., 325 U.S. 327, 65 USPQ 297 (1945). See also In re Leshin, 227 F.2d 197, 125 USPQ 416 (CCPA 1960). MPEP § 2144.07.

3. Claim 3 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP '643 in view of either Yamaura, Takada or Mohwald as applied to claim 1 above.

The difference between claim 3 and JP '643 is that JP '643 does not teach of the weight ratio between the inorganic material to the carbonaceous material being between 99:1 and 60:40.

While JP '643 discloses providing both an inorganic component 4 and carbon component 3 in a coating material to a positive active material 1, the disclosure does

not specifically teach of the ratio of these two materials, however it is clear that there is an inherent ratio between these two components.

Varying the amount of each of components 2, 3 and 4 of the coating layer are recognizable optimizable components. One of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that by varying the amount of carbon in the film, the electronic conductivity of film would vary accordingly. One of ordinary skill in the art would have also recognized that by varying the amount of the inorganic lithium compound in the film, the ionic conductivity of the film would vary accordingly. Adjusting the ratios of both materials will optimize the ionic and electronic conductivity of the film and selection of the claimed ratio would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art since it would have provided a coating which exhibited optimal ionic and electronic conductivities.

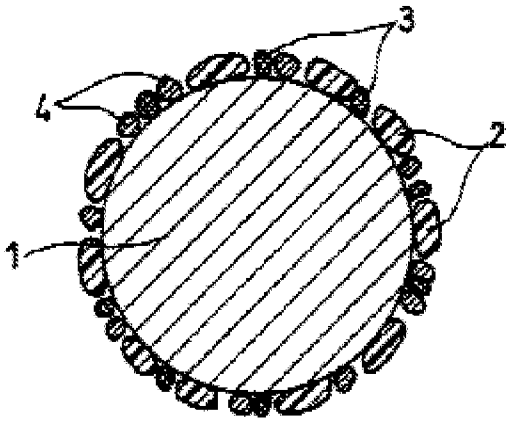
Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the claimed invention was made to modify the teachings of JP '643 by adjusting the ratios of both the carbon component and inorganic component of the film of JP '643 within the ratio defined in claim 3 since the optimization of these would have been a recognized result-effective variable which could have been optimized since it would have provided a coating which exhibited optimal ionic and electronic conductivities. Generally, differences in ranges will not support the patentability of subject matter encompassed by the prior art unless there is evidence indicating such ranges is critical. In re Boesch, 617 F.2d 272, 205 USPQ 215 (CCPA 1980). In re Aller, 220 F.2d 454, 456, 105 USPQ 233, 235 (CCPA 1955). In re Hoeschele, 406 F.2d 1403, 160 USPQ

809 (CCPA 1969). It has been held that when the difference between a claimed invention and the prior art is the range or value of a particular variable, then a prima facie rejection is properly established when the difference in the range or value is minor. Titanium Metals Corp. of Am. v. Banner, 778 F.2d 775, 783, 227 USPQ 773, 779 (Fed. Cir. 1985).

4. Claims 5-6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over JP '643 in view of either U.S. Patent No. 4,668,594 (Yamaura); U.S. Patent No. 5,958,281 (Takada) or U.S. Patent No. 6,475,663 (Mohwald).

JP '643 discloses a positive active material comprising: particles of a compound oxide of lithium and a transition metal 1 (figures and paragraphs 10 and 24) having an inherent layered structure thereby permitting the intercalation/deintercalation of lithium during charging/discharging and a coating layer on the active material 1 wherein the coating layer comprises an inorganic lithium compound 4 (paragraphs 10 and 23) and a carbonaceous conductive material 3 (paragraph 10 and 23 as applied to claim 5). The inorganic compound 4 is a lithium compound (paragraph 23 as applied to claim 5). The weight ratio of the particles 1 to the coating 2/3/4 teaches of particle weights of 10 grams relative to about 1 gram of coating material (see examples for weight ratios). Thus JP '643 teaches that the weight ratio of the particles will clearly be at least 70% but less than 98% relative to the coating layer 2/3/4 (as applied to claim 5).

The coating layer with the inorganic filler 4 and carbonaceous material 3 substantially covers the entire surface of the base particle 1 as shown in Fig. 1).



JP ‘643 discloses a nonaqueous secondary battery comprising: a negative active material and a positive active material comprising: particles of a compound oxide of lithium and a transition metal 1 (figures and paragraphs 10 and 24) having an inherent layered structure thereby permitting the intercalation/deintercalation of lithium during charging/discharging and a coating layer on the active material 1 wherein the coating layer comprises an inorganic lithium compound 4 (paragraphs 10 and 23) and a carbonaceous conductive material 3 (paragraph 10 and 23 as applied to claim 5).

The positive active material can be a variety of metal oxides including lithium nickel manganese oxide (para. 24 as applied to claim 5).

JP ‘643 does not specify that the inorganic material is either lithium iron phosphate or lithium phosphate (claim 5) or the weight ratio between the inorganic material to the carbonaceous material being between 99:1 and 60:40 (claim 6).

Regarding the inorganic material being either lithium iron phosphate or lithium phosphate (claim and 5):

Essentially JP '643 teaches of coating lithium metal oxide base particles with a mixture of an inorganic conducting material and an electron conducting material.

While the inorganic conducting materials taught by JP '643 are not inclusive of either lithium iron phosphate or lithium phosphate, JP '643 does teach that the inorganic material is a lithium ion conductive inorganic solid electrolyte material (see abstract). Thus one of ordinary skill in the art would have reasonably appreciated that the inorganic material coated on the positive electrode active material could reasonably be any known teach that the inorganic material is a lithium ion with a reasonable expectation that any such combination would effectively operate in the desired manner taught by JP '643, absent clear evidence to the contrary.

Each of lithium iron phosphate and lithium phosphate are art recognized ion conductive materials used in lithium secondary batteries as shown by either Yamaura (col. 5, ll. 33-37); Takada (col. 1, ll. 32-55); or Mohwald (col. 4, ll. 43-65). Thus it would have been apparent to one of ordinary skill in the art to use either lithium iron phosphate or lithium phosphate as an alternative ion conducting inorganic material coated onto the positive electrode since the primary reference teaches that it is generally known to coat lithium metal oxide base particles with a mixture of a lithium ion conducting inorganic material and an electron conducting material and since the specific inorganic materials of lithium iron phosphate and lithium phosphate are art recognized ion conductive materials used in lithium secondary batteries as shown by either Yamaura, Takada, or Mohwald.

Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the claimed invention was made to modify the teachings of JP '643 by selecting the lithium ion conducting inorganic material to be either lithium iron phosphate or lithium phosphate since such materials are art recognized lithium ion conducting inorganic materials as shown by either Yamaura, Takada, or Mohwald and one of ordinary skill in the art would have found such a modification to have provided the predictable result of providing a coating to the positive active material having both the requisite electron conducting and lithium ion conducting properties. The selection of a known material based on its suitability for its intended use supported a prima facie obviousness determination in Sinclair & Carroll Co. v. Interchemical Corp., 325 U.S. 327, 65 USPQ 297 (1945). See also In re Leshin, 227 F.2d 197, 125 USPQ 416 (CCPA 1960). MPEP § 2144.07.

Regarding the weight ratio between the inorganic material to the carbonaceous material being between 99:1 and 60:40 (claim 6):

While JP '643 discloses providing both an inorganic component 4 and carbon component 3 in a coating material to a positive active material 1, the disclosure does not specifically teach of the ratio of these two materials, however it is clear that there is an inherent ratio between these two components.

Varying the amount of each of components 2, 3 and 4 of the coating layer are recognizable optimizable components. One of ordinary skill in the art would have recognized that by varying the amount of carbon in the film, the electronic conductivity of film would vary accordingly. One of ordinary skill in the art would have also

recognized that by varying the amount of the inorganic lithium compound in the film, the ionic conductivity of the film would vary accordingly. Adjusting the ratios of both materials will optimize the ionic and electronic conductivity of the film and selection of the claimed ratio would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art since it would have provided a coating which exhibited optimal ionic and electronic conductivities.

Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the claimed invention was made to modify the teachings of JP '643 by adjusting the ratios of both the carbon component and inorganic component of the film of JP '643 within the ratio defined in claim 6 since the optimization of these would have been a recognized result-effective variable which could have been optimized since it would have provided a coating which exhibited optimal ionic and electronic conductivities. Generally, differences in ranges will not support the patentability of subject matter encompassed by the prior art unless there is evidence indicating such ranges is critical. In re Boesch, 617 F.2d 272, 205 USPQ 215 (CCPA 1980). In re Aller, 220 F.2d 454, 456, 105 USPQ 233, 235 (CCPA 1955). In re Hoeschele, 406 F.2d 1403, 160 USPQ 809 (CCPA 1969). It has been held that when the difference between a claimed invention and the prior art is the range or value of a particular variable, then a prima facie rejection is properly established when the difference in the range or value is minor. Titanium Metals Corp. of Am. v. Banner, 778 F.2d 775, 783, 227 USPQ 773, 779 (Fed. Cir. 1985).

Response to Arguments

5. Applicant's arguments filed February 28, 2011 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Applicant currently argues that it is an indispensable condition to cover the front face of the particle … with a lithium ion polymer and thus teaches of a three-part coating which must include the lithium ion polymer.

This argument is not persuasive since the claimed invention still does not preclude a 3-part coating and does not preclude the presence of a lithium ion conducting polymer in the claimed invention.

It is noted that while the amendment recites now that the surface coating is a mixture "consisting essentially" of an inorganic compound and a carbonaceous material, the phrase "consisting essentially" does not exclusively limit the coating to only these material.

According to the MPEP (such as MPEP § 2111.03) and prior case law, the transitional phrase “consisting essentially of” limits the scope of a claim to the specified materials or steps “and those that do not materially affect the basic and novel characteristic(s)” of the claimed invention. In re Herz, 537 F.2d 549, 551-52, 190 USPQ 461, 463 (CCPA 1976) (emphasis in original).

“A consisting essentially of’ claim occupies a middle ground between closed claims that are written in a consisting of’ format and fully open claims that are drafted in a comprising’ format.” PPG Industries v. Guardian Industries, 156 F.3d 1351, 1354, 48 USPQ2d 1351, 1353-54 (Fed. Cir. 1998). See also Atlas Powder v. E.I. duPont de Nemours & Co., 750 F.2d 1569, 224 USPQ 409 (Fed. Cir. 1984); In re Janakirama-

Rao, 317 F.2d 951, 137 USPQ 893 (CCPA 1963); Water Technologies Corp. vs. Calco, Ltd., 850 F.2d 660, 7 USPQ2d 1097 (Fed. Cir. 1988). For the purposes of searching for and applying prior art under 35 U.S.C. 102 and 103, absent a clear indication in the specification or claims of what the basic and novel characteristics actually are, "consisting essentially of" will be construed as equivalent to "comprising." See, e.g., PPG, 156 F.3d at 1355, 48 USPQ2d at 1355 ("PPG could have defined the scope of the phrase consisting essentially of' for purposes of its patent by making clear in its specification what it regarded as constituting a material change in the basic and novel characteristics of the invention."). See also AK Steel Corp. v. Sollac, 344 F.3d 1234, 1240-41, 68 USPQ2d 1280, 1283-84 (Fed. Cir. 2003) (Applicant's statement in the specification that "silicon contents in the coating metal should not exceed about 0.5% by weight" along with a discussion of the deleterious effects of silicon provided basis to conclude that silicon in excess of 0.5% by weight would materially alter the basic and novel properties of the invention. Thus, "consisting essentially of" as recited in the preamble was interpreted to permit no more than 0.5% by weight of silicon in the aluminum coating.); In re Janakirama-Rao, 317 F.2d 951, 954, 137 USPQ 893, 895-96 (CCPA 1963). If an applicant contends that additional steps or materials in the prior art are excluded by the recitation of "consisting essentially of," applicant has the burden of showing that the introduction of additional steps or components would materially change the characteristics of applicant's invention. In re De Lajarte, 337 F.2d 870, 143 USPQ 256 (CCPA 1964). See also Ex parte Hoffman, 12 USPQ2d 1061, 1063-64 (Bd. Pat. App. & Inter. 1989) ("Although consisting essentially of' is typically used and defined in

the context of compositions of matter, we find nothing intrinsically wrong with the use of such language as a modifier of method steps. . . [rendering] the claim open only for the inclusion of steps which do not materially affect the basic and novel characteristics of the claimed method. To determine the steps included versus excluded the claim must be read in light of the specification. . . . [I]t is an applicant's burden to establish that a step practiced in a prior art method is excluded from his claims by consisting essentially of' language.").

In response to applicant's argument that the references fail to show certain features of applicant's invention, it is noted that the features upon which applicant relies (i.e., that the coating of the claimed invention does not include the presence of a lithium ion conducting polymer and is not a 3-part coating) is still not recited in the rejected claim(s). Although the claims are interpreted in light of the specification, limitations from the specification are not read into the claims. See *In re Van Geuns*, 988 F.2d 1181, 26 USPQ2d 1057 (Fed. Cir. 1993).

The fact that the claims fail to recite the presence of materials other than the inorganic compound and carbonaceous material on the surface of the base particle does not limit the mixture only to those materials as the language of the claim fails to clearly limit the coating only to the inorganic compound and carbonaceous material. Again it is therefore evident that this argument is not persuasive since the claimed invention does not preclude a 3-part coating and does not preclude the presence of a lithium ion conducting polymer in the claimed invention.

"By using the term 'consisting essentially of,' the drafter signals that the invention necessarily includes the listed ingredients and is open to unlisted ingredients that do not materially affect the basic and novel properties of the invention. It is an applicant's burden to establish that a step practiced in a prior art method is excluded from his claims by consisting essentially of language.

The previous responses to arguments are maintained and incorporated herein as set forth in the previous office actions.

Therefore the particular claimed ratios are not held to be clearly patentable over the prior art of record and what would have been within the skill of the ordinary worker in the art and the prior art rejections of record stand.

Conclusion

6. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Gregg Cantelmo whose telephone number is 571-272-1283. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday to Thursday, 8:30-6:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Pat Ryan can be reached on 571-272-1292. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see http://pair-direct.uspto.gov. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Gregg Cantelmo/
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 1726